

Eugene O'Neil House (Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site,
Kuss Road Tao House)
Danville VICINITY
Contra Costa County
California

HABS No. CA-2078

HABS
CAL,
7-DAN.V,
1-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

ADDENDUM
50111

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

STATE California	COUNTY Contra Costa	TOWN OR VICINITY Danville
HISTORIC NAME OF STRUCTURE (INCLUDE SOURCE FOR NAME) Eugene O'Neill House		HABS NO. CA-2078
SECONDARY OR COMMON NAMES OF STRUCTURE Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site, Tao House		
COMPLETE ADDRESS (DESCRIBE LOCATION FOR RURAL SITES) Kuss Road, Danville, California		
DATE OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE SOURCE) 1937	ARCHITECT(S) (INCLUDE SOURCE) Carlotta O'Neill and Frederick Confer	
SIGNIFICANCE (ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL, INCLUDE ORIGINAL USE OF STRUCTURE) House of playwright Eugene O'Neill until 1944. O'Neil played a central role in elevating the importance of theater as an artistic expression. Some of O'Neill's best work was written at this house. The Chinese motifs of the house were designed to convey O'Neill's concept of a serene Oriental existence.		
STYLE (IF APPROPRIATE)		
MATERIAL OF CONSTRUCTION (INCLUDE STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS) Concrete blocks and wood		
SHAPE AND DIMENSIONS OF STRUCTURE (SKETCHED FLOOR PLANS ON SEPARATE PAGES ARE ACCEPTABLE) L-shaped, two stories		
EXTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE Low-pitched black tile roof, wooden shutters painted red		
INTERIOR FEATURES OF NOTE (DESCRIBE FLOOR PLANS, IF NOT SKETCHED) Red Chinese tile floors on first floor, Chinese furnishings, many wall recesses to accommodate a large personal library		
MAJOR ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS WITH DATES Post 1944 -- addition of wood and stucco two story projecting wing, second chimney in front, wooden railing on upper west porch replaced by wrought-iron railing		
PRESENT CONDITION AND USE Sheep ranch, Good condition		
OTHER INFORMATION AS APPROPRIATE This was the last of several of O'Neill's residences.		
SOURCES OF INFORMATION (INCLUDING LISTING ON NATIONAL REGISTER, STATE REGISTERS, ETC.) The National Register of Historic Places		
COMPILER, AFFILIATION Melissa McDonald		DATE 6-14-83

Addendum to:

Eugene O'Neill House
(Eugene O'Neill National Historic Site,
Tao House)
Kuss Road
Danville vicinity
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ADDENDUM TO:

EUGENE O'NEILL HOUSE
(Tao House)

HABS No. CA-2078

HABS
CAL
7-DAN.V.
1-

Location: Kuss Road, off Bradford Place. Vicinity of Danville in
Contra Costa County, California.

Present
Owner: Corduroy Hills Joint Venture.

Report
Preparation: Robert M. Cox, Historical Architect, National Park Service,
Western Region.
Susan McCown, editor, Historic American Buildings Survey,
Washington, D.C.

Significance: Eugene O'Neill is held by many critics to be the central
figure in the coming age of American drama. O'Neill alone,
among that generation of writers which included Hemingway and
Lewis, succeeded in making of the American stage a vehicle
of mature artistic expression. His was the achievement which
ultimately proved the outstanding contribution toward a new
dimension of realism and the attainment of great tragedy
within the American theater, As one writer has observed:
"Before O'Neill, the U.S. had theater; after O'Neill it had
drama".

During his peripatetic career, O'Neill inhabited a succession
of houses. Tao house, however, has singular importance. Here
the playwright did his final and some of his best work; and
the seven years passed in this place constituted perhaps the
longest period of relative happiness that O'Neill's stormy
life knew. The house is an example of Spanish Colonial style.

At Tao House, O'Neill wrote The Iceman Cometh (1939), A
Moon for the Misbegotten (1943), and completed several plays--
including A Touch of the Poet and More Stately Mansions-- through
which he hoped to portray the saga of an American family.
Finally, O'Neill here wrote the autobiographical masterpiece,
Long Days Journey Into Night-- "a tale of old sorrow, written
in tears and blood", and possibly his greatest work.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Tao House is of Spanish Colonial style. It forms two sides of a square and is L-shaped. The remainder of the square is formed by a garage at one corner and a small guest cottage at another, all joined by masonry walls, enclosing a generous and attractive entrance courtyard. The residence is partly two story, part one story and has a partial basement. Owners since the O'Neills have made changes on both exterior and interior that have diluted the Spanish character.

On April 24, 1937, 158 acres of land were bought from the Bryant family by Eugene and Carlotta O'Neill. Immediately following the purchase the O'Neills hired Architect Frederick Reimers to design a new Spanish Colonial house for them. They decided that the design would be a concept of a Spanish-Mexican rancho. Some of the design of their former Georgia house, Casa Genotta, a similar rancho, was borrowed for the new house. As for the interior they specified Oriental style. They named their new house Tao House, meaning roughly "the right way of life" of the Taoist faith.

Not long after they started planning the house, the O'Neills dropped Reimers in favor of Frederick L. Confer, a Berkeley architect. Confer made some changes in the design, dropping the southwest wing, its patio extension and other features. Construction took only a few months to complete, and the O'Neills moved in on December 28, 1937.

OTHER INFORMATION

The house and the outbuildings sit part way upslope on the east side of a range of low hills parallel to the Pacific Ocean. Most of the slope below the property has been developed as residential communities. The land on either side and above the site is owned by the East Bay Regional Parks and is and will remain completely undeveloped.

Views from the house have changed since the O'Neills lived here: new homes have been built in the vicinity, Danville has expanded and freeways were added. However, the immediate surroundings are much as they were when the O'Neills were in residence. Many of the trees, shrubs and hedges seen now were planted at the O'Neills' direction.

CONSTRUCTION CHANGES

A number of changes were made in the construction of the property by Builder Lloyd Simpson from what the Confer drawings called for. These were carried out after the O'Neills were consulted. The notable changes in the main wing of the house which the O'Neills were to inhabit, that is, everything from the kitchen south, were as follows:

1. The bookcases in the center of the east and west walls of the living room were installed as shown on the plans; but the very day after they moved in, December 31, 1937, Carlotta wrote in her diary: "Gene and I decide that we don't like long book cases (like a public library!) in our lovely living room--so we will have one [on the west] filled up with a beautiful sapphire blue mirror--the other side [east] with our long, lovely Coromandel screen! This with white stone (sic) walls, midnight blue ceilings, tiled floor--will be something! And our 18th Century (sic) Chinese furniture!" And that is what was done. The mirror was apparently emplaced on January 17, 1938. It was tinted blue, and consisted of two or three vertical sheets of glass installed in the bookcase recess to give the room a more spacious feeling. The Coromandel screen was mounted on the east wall between the two windows which faced Mount Diablo.

2. Similarly, the bookcase at the west end of the entrance hall, as shown in the plans, was replaced by a two-panel green tinted mirror, and by January 6, 1938, when Carlotta mentioned this mirror in her diary, O'Neill had decided to have a smoky black mirror between the windows in his bedroom. These were installed January 14, 1938, according to her diary.

3. Deep built-in cabinets just to the left and right against the west wall as one entered the door of "Rosie's Room" were never installed. "Rosie's Room" was intended as a music room to house the upright piano decorated with painted roses which Carlotta had purchased from a music bureau as a 1934 birthday present for O'Neill; although Simpson thought it had been bought by O'Neill from a Paris whorehouse while they lived in France, actually it originated in a New Orleans bagnio. The room was specified by the piano's name on the original plans. Instead of the cabinets called for on the plans, O'Neill placed a free-standing wooden record cabinet to the left as one entered the door, backed up against the west wall, and to the right, the electric player piano, backed up against the south wall with its right end against the west wall.

4. The plans called for a bookcase on the north wall of "Rosie's Room;" whether or not the bookshelves were installed, the recess for it was emplaced. The one historic photo showing O'Neill in that portion of the room shows this recess with the shelves removed, very likely with a fiberboard panel cut to fit in the recess and painted white to match the woodwork and the walls (although it is possible simply the back wall of the bookcase was used), and used as a bulletin board. In the one available photo, the only item on the board is a map labeled "Environment and Conflict in Europe/Eighteen Basic Maps" and featuring "Central Europe" in this particular map. The map is apparently a part of a series of wartime maps published by a New York university.

5. The balcony shown on sheet 4 to extend down the west side of O'Neill's upstairs suite and wrap around the south end of the building was never built; instead, the balcony as built ended just south of the west window in O'Neill's study, some distance north of the end of the wall on the second floor, and a separate open-top porch railed in a solid baselite block wall over the first floor guest room was accessible only through the French doors at the south end of O'Neill's study. The porch was later roofed and completely enclosed.

6. As drawn by the architect in July, the north wall of O'Neill's study was to have near its west end, just east of the entrance door leading in from O'Neill's bedroom suite, an open niche for a filing cabinet, and near its east end, a niche filled with open shelves. There was to be a fireplace in the middle. However, this was changed in the plans dated October 4 to show in place of the filing cabinet niche a closet concealed behind a knotty pine door, and the paneling of the room in this version was to be of knotty pine, with a ceiling featuring a pattern of concentric rectangles. What was actually built was quite different. The walls were of planks, but not knotty pine; they were finished in a grayish-brown stain, possibly an "antiqueing" finish. The ceiling was of east-west beams beneath planks, not the concentric rectangles. The beams were the same color as the walls, but the planks were a Chinese red. And on the north wall, the open niche for the filing cabinet called for in the July plan was what actually was built west of the fireplace, while to the east was a recessed cabinet or broom closet with one shelf concealed behind a hidden door of planks matching the wall, a door activated by a spring latch. The other walls of the study were built generally as indicated in the July plans, but not of knotty pine called for in the October plans. None of the architectural drawings showed the shelves, at least two of which, perhaps three, were installed on the north wall at different levels to accommodate O'Neill's ship models, but Builder Lloyd Simpson remembered installing them.

7. The double lift door on the garage, which differed from Confer's original concept of separate recessed doors for each of the two automobile stalls, was not built according to the plan. A single, two-car width overhead-lift door was installed, and the gable tiled roof, whose gable had been changed from a north-south gable in the concept to an east-west gable in the plans, was actually built by Simpson as a hipped roof with that alteration marked crudely on the original plan. This change resulted no doubt from the fact that the main part of the house had an essentially hipped roof and the storage building at the southwest corner of the garden had a hipped roof, which left the proposed gable-roof of the garage at the northwest corner of the garden strikingly inconsistent.

8. The pillars on each side of the gate in the center of the west wall of the garden were changed in design from those in the plan, which differed from those on the original rendering.

NOTE: There are reports of post-construction changes in the Architectural section.

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ARCHITECTURAL

INFORMATION

THE COURTYARD

The courtyard is on the southwest face of the residence. The main wing is oriented northwest to southeast.

Roof: The roof of this main wing and, in fact, the whole house is finished with handcrafted black terra-cotta tiles, sealed with white mortar at all ridges. The roof is hipped, of a moderate pitch, with generous overhangs supported on shaped lookouts. There are no gutters or downspouts on the courtyard side of the house; near the loggia there is a specially designed drip-trough to take rain water from the eaves.

Walls: The major material is basaltic block, common bond. Blocks are not the standard shape but long and more slender with a resemblance to adobe. All of the block walls were reinforced with a pair of 3/8 inch round steel bars placed vertically at four feet on center and with another pair of 3/8 inch round reinforcing steel bars at every third course placed horizontally. This is the major wall element of the main part of the house. The other original primary element is horizontal siding, wood-like in appearance, made of cement and asbestos called transite. Such siding used here only on the northwest at the service wing, which is single-story. The remainder of this facade is two stories. All walls are white.

Balconies: The single second-floor balcony on the courtyard side is 7 feet deep and 48 feet long. It parallels Eugene O'Neill's suite on the second floor. The main roof covers this balcony, which is carried on a series of white posts.

Terraces: There are two terraces at grade, one on each side of the entrance pavilion. The one to the right is below the balcony but is extended to the end of the building, an additional 20 feet--all paved with red brick. The loggia on the left side of the facade parallels the dining room, pantry and kitchen and is paved with large square terra-cotta paving tiles. This also is roofed and is within the single-story portion of the structure. Posts are 6 by 6 wood and painted white. There are semicircular, raised, stepped brick platforms for displaying potted plants at both loggia and terrace; all are original. During the O'Neill occupancy, these were all of brick paving as they are now. Stepping stones arranged to and around the "birdbath" are of brick and are believed to be from O'Neill's days. The garden path was arranged so that on entering the courtyard from the driveway, one turned sharp right on a brick walk, then a sharp left in 10 or 15 feet and down a straight brick path to the front porch of the house; and on the porch, one turned left again and faced the front door.

Doors, Windows and Shutters: All doors on this courtyard face are paired glazed french doors except the main entry. As with the windows, they are wood and are recessed within the depth of the basaltic block wall. Each pair is equipped with screens. Each pair is also equipped

with full-length wood shutters, which are operable, and painted a reddish-brown color that contrasts with the white walls and black roof. Windows are wood, double-hung, 2 over 2 sash, which vary in size, although the style is consistent. They, too, are equipped with operable wood shutters. The main entry is in a projecting pavilion, now more than double in size from the original. The door is a single-panel flush wood door, painted to match the shutters. It is equipped with a screen door.

Changes: The major items which affect the external appearance of the residence occur on this courtyard facade. First is the two-story addition to the entrance hall. It is 15 1/2 feet wide and projects 13 1/2 feet into the courtyard and is wood-framed. Half of the ground floor is glazed, and the remaining half of the ground floor is solid wall finished with stucco.

At the second floor of the addition, the finish is vertical white-painted board and batten. Shutters and windows match the original and the roof has been extended to match. This ties it all to the original structure. Another major change is the addition of a fireplace in the living room. The fireplace can be seen from this side. The chimney extends up the face of the house, through the second floor balcony and pierces the roof where the balcony joins the face of the house. In addition, that balcony has had the railing changed from wood to ornamental ironwork fillagree. In addition, at the guest suite, a low metal-framed awning support now roofed with corrugated plastic, was originally finished with a more traditional canvas awning. Finally, part of the ceiling of the loggia has had a board-finish added to the underside of the rafters. That was enclosed with fine metal mesh screening and used as a living-eating porch by new owners. Screening has been removed, but tacking strips and some screening support material are still attached to the columns. On all other porches, the underside of the structure and the roofing tiles are exposed. Most of the roof over the maids' rooms and that part of the wing has been enlarged; i.e., the ridge has been raised or elevated over the original.

Other: The landscaping of the courtyard has been changed from the original design; however, the original and the current layouts had the same major elements. The courtyard is on two levels. The higher is from the entrance gate sloping gently down toward the house. The lower level is from a step-down at a low rubble retaining wall to a nearly flat area partially surfaced with brick and partly covered with plants immediately in front of and parallel to the house. Within the sloped lawn, there is a large umbrella tree and a stone pedestal fountain or birdbath, both in the original garden and still in place. Stepping stone walks, hedges and plants near the house have changed considerably from the design known to the O'Neills. The umbrella tree is pre-O'Neill and is shown in paintings done in early days. Birch trees in the courtyard were planted by the Gerdes/Miller family and are post-O'Neill.

THE SOUTHEAST FACADE

Roof: From this end view, one sees the low-hipped portion over the main wing of terra-cotta mission tiles sealed with white mortar at ridges. There is also a wood-framed shingled roof over the second floor study porch at the end of the house. This roof was added by O'Neill shortly after he first occupied the house.

Walls: The house walls are common bond basaltic block. On this elevation of the house, one also sees an expanse of the stepped wall which encloses the courtyard. It is from 4 to 6 feet high and is capped. There is a horizontal crack in the block wall where it joins the house. The end wall of the house at ground floor has a single window, centered, from which the shutters have been removed. The southeast facade of the small guest cottage is also a part of this elevation. That building will be covered in a separate part of this report.

Windows: The former second-floor porch has a group of three in-swinging casement sashes on this face.

THE NORTHEAST FACADE

Roof: This is the other major face of the residence. The roof is as previously described: hipped, black mission tile with white mortar at the ridges. There is also a hipped roof finished with wood shingles over the small porch off of O'Neill's study.

Walls: The major material is common bond basaltic block for the two-story section of the house. The two-story bay is wood frame. The lower service wing portion has wood frame walls, with horizontal transite siding. Both wood and basaltic block are painted white. The basement level on this side is near grade and under the service wing. That gives the service wing two stories on the northwest side, as the natural grade slopes down.

Windows, Doors and Shutters: There are but three doors on this side of the house. Two fully glazed doors are at the framed bay, one leading out from Rosie's room to the terrace at ground level and one from Carlotta's bedroom to a balcony on the second floor. The third door is half-glazed and is in the guest room bathroom, leading out from a recess to the terrace which parallels the living room.

All of the original windows on this side of the house are wood double-hung sashes, except the window in the center of the bay, which has fixed glazing. There were no shutters at the bay. All other windows in the basaltic block on this side had operable wood shutters. Two pairs have been removed from the two original windows in the living room wall and in the dining room wall.

Changes: In the living room, there is now a large fixed window as well as the original two double-hung sashes which are on either side of it. In order to have a full view from the large window, a later owner removed the shutters from the two double-hung sashes. Two porch posts and post caps have also been removed to improve the view from the living room. At the dining room, the wall and the window were removed and a 4 foot wood-frame extension was added. The dining room window in place is a large, single-pane fixed glass without shutters.

THE NORTHWEST FACADE - (THE SERVICE WING)

Roof: This is, of course, the same as the roof of the remainder of the house, black mission-type terra-cotta with concrete infill at ridges of the hipped roof. Yet the line has changed because the former service yard has become a room and is now roofed to match the remainder of the house and the roof line was raised somewhat during this work. The sun screen roof over the terrace beside that new room is also post-O'Neill.

Walls: The greater part of this elevation is wood frame with horizontal transite siding. The structure is, in part, two-story on this side, as the basement story is exposed on this face by the lower grade on the corner. From the courtyard, this wing appears as a single story. The garage portion of the elevation is basaltic block, common bond. All transite and all block are painted white. There is a short run of brick steps to the door.

Terraces: There is a red brick terrace with a wood framed sun screen roof over it. This is not original to the house; it was added by later owners of the building. The sun screen roof is of green corrugated plastic.

Windows, Doors and Shutters: Two original doors on this side of the house are both half-glazed. One leads into the basement. The other is in the service entry to the house. There are three new five-lite glazed doors in the new room. All windows are double-hung, wood sashes. Those in the corner section of the building have no shutters; the remainder have shutters, all still in place. The basement windows have no shutters. The added room has no shutters at the glazed doors.

Changes: Beside the garage, there was a partly walled unroofed recess, which was called a service yard. Later owners filled this space and made it a party room. They matched wall materials and the roof structure. The terrace, with its screen roof, was mentioned earlier. Near the rear entry, there is an iron triangle that was added by new owners for calling hired hands to meals.

THE MOTORCOURT FACADE

The face of the house is mainly the wall which encloses the southwest face of the courtyard. It also includes the garage on the left (northwest end) and an end of the guest cottage on the right (southeast end). Both the garage and the guest cottage have similar hipped roofs, the same sort of shaped rafter ends which support the main roof on all sides, and the same black mission-style terra-cotta tile on the roof, sealed with white mortar at ridges. The long wall is basaltic block, capped; and the faces of both end buildings are of basaltic block, all in common bond and all painted white. In the center of the wall, there is a black painted, solid wood gate, with a block pilaster on either side. On this outside face of the wall, mounted on one of the pilasters, there is a black ball, original from the days of the O'Neills. At the guest cottage end, on the outside beside the driveway, there was a black metal hitching post (so described by a later owner of the property). This was removed, sandblasted and repainted and is now back in place, firmly anchored to a new concrete base. It is in the shape of a jockey, 38 inches high. An arm of the figure is extended and holds a ring for tying horses; the overall width of the figure is 18 inches. There are no special items or recommendations for this public facade of the house, which are not covered in other portions of this report.

THE ENTRY HALL

The entry hall is 12 feet wide by 18 feet long and has a 9 foot 4 inch high ceiling (original size).

Situation: The main entrance is from the front brick terrace through a wide single-panel door into a short wing projecting into the courtyard. Several rooms open off this hall--living room, dining room and Rosie's room as well as a lavatory and some closets. The stairs to the second floor and to the basement also lead from this hall.

Floors: The floors are of square and rectangular glazed terra-cotta tile of varied red finishes and sizes, laid at 45 degrees to the main axis with 1/2 inch joints. There are at least nine floor tile sizes used: 12 by 12, 12 by 3, 11 1/2 by 8 1/2, 11 1/2 by 5 1/2, 8 1/2 by 8 1/2, 8 1/2 by 5 1/2, 6 by 6, 6 by 3 and 2 1/2 by 2 1/2.

Walls: Exterior walls and structural partitions are common bond basaltite block; other partitions are wood frame with plaster finish, all now painted light green. The original color was cream (off-white), similar to Munsell Color No. 5Y-9/2.

Ceiling: The ceiling is a plaster finish painted white. The original color was blue, similar to Munsell Color No. 10B-4/4.

Entry Door: The entry is a single four foot wide door, 7 foot 2 inch high vertical plank, with V-grooves and painted. The original color of the exterior face was similar to Munsell Color No. 7.5R-4/6, which is a rich red-brown color. The inside face was a red and similar to Munsell Color No. 10R-3/10. This may have been the same shade used on the exterior, but the light and weather could have changed it to the color quoted.

Trim and Casework: Original trim occurred only at the main door; in the addition, there is trim around the windows. These suffer from condensation at the glass areas. The window area needs caulking, patching and repainting. Glass may need to be reset.

Stairs: The stairs are of wood-frame construction with a stepped plastered baluster with tile caps. The tile matches the floor. Risers and treads are wood with a natural finish and a carpet. There is a large-diameter hemp rope handrail, carried on brass railing holders on one wall. This handrail is not original.

Changes: On the southwest end of the hall, there is a new space that was joined to the original entry and added 12 feet to the length of the passage. It also added a great deal of glazed area to the entry-way. This includes a storage space, guest closet and a lavatory near the front door. The addition eliminated an original bookcase at the ground level and changed access to the basement stairs.

THE LIVING ROOM

The living room is 17 feet wide by 30 feet long and has a 9 foot 4 inch high ceiling.

Situation: This space is located off the entry hall and has windows on both its long walls; one side faces a view of Mt. Diablo and the other, the courtyard.

Floors: The floors are square and rectangular terra-cotta tile of varied red finishes and sizes, laid at 45 degrees to the main axis with 1/2 inch mortar joints, same as the entry hall.

Walls: All four walls of this room are of common bond basalite block, painted a light green color. There are two built-in bookcases on one end wall. There were two other bookcases on the long side walls but they have been removed. The original wall color was cream (off-white) and similar to Munsell Color No. 5Y-9/2.

Ceiling: The ceiling is a plaster finish, now painted white. The original color was dark blue. Similar to Munsell Color No. 10B-4/4.

Trim and Casework: Originally, the only trim occurred at windows and around one door at the end of the room leading to guest quarters. The living room side of the guest room door was painted a Chinese Red, which is similar to Munsell Color No. 10R-3/10.

Windows: There are four original wood double-hung sashes, two over two, with built-in, roll-up window screens. There is a single lite fixed window, not original, on the northeast wall (view side). Original and new windows have simple wood frames set into the thickness of the basalite walls with painted narrow wood window stools.

Changes: The original fireplace was at the end of the room opposite the entry. It is now blocked off and a new fireplace has been added on the southwest wall (courtyard side). It replaces a recessed book-case. On the opposite side, the large fixed-glass window facing the view also replaced a recessed bookcase. At the entry end of the room, the two remaining bookcases, which were originally open, are covered with wood doors added by a later owner.

THE DINING ROOM

The dining room was 15 feet wide by 17 feet long (original size) and has a 9 foot 4 inch high ceiling.

Situation: The dining room is located on the northwest side of the entrance hall with the pantry opposite.

Floors: The floors are square and rectangular terra-cotta tile of varied red finishes and sizes, laid at 45 degrees to the main axis with 1/2 inch mortar joints. There is an electrical call button set in the floor near the center of this room.

Walls: All walls of the original room are common bond basaltic block with three large recesses and one narrow built-in recess. Original drawings show they were all supplied with shelves. The only shelves at present are in the narrow recess beside the pantry door. In the O'Neills' time, the recess to the right of the entry had shelves in the upper part and a built-in cupboard below. All walls are in good condition with the exception of minor cracks on either side of the doors to the loggia. Walls and recesses are all painted pale green. The original color was cream (off-white) and similar to Munsell Color No. 5Y-9/2.

Ceiling: The ceiling has a plaster finish. With the exception of a small crack on the service side and another on the entry side, the ceiling is in good condition. The ceiling is now painted pale green. The original color was blue, but not the same shade as in the entry and was similar to Munsell No. 5 PB-4/4.

Trim and Casework: There is wood trim at the doors. The entry from the hallway was a simple flat arch, uncased. New owners added a pair of louvered wood folding doors to this opening and a wood door jamb. The double-acting door into the pantry was painted a Chinese Red on the dining room side, similar to Munsell Color No. 10R-3/10.

Changes: There is a 4 foot addition by later owners which makes the present room length 21 feet. The original double-hung window was replaced by the bay with a large fixed picture window facing Mt. Diablo. There is also an additional cupboard, the upper part for the storage of plates and the lower with a built-in wall safe. At the opposite end of the room, original drawings and subsequent photographs show a double-hung window facing the loggia (courtyard side), where there now exists a pair of glazed doors. It is unknown when the change from window to door occurred, but during O'Neill's time, these were windows. Mr. Simpson, the builder of the house, refers, in a tape-recorded interview, to "doors" from the dining room out to the loggia.

ROSIE'S ROOM

Rosie's room is 12 feet wide and 12 feet deep at the bay window and has a 9 foot 4 inch high ceiling.

Situation: This room was built specifically for a player piano named "Rosie", which the O'Neills took with them from house to house. It is situated in the center of the house and forms a projection on the northeast side, facing a view toward Mt. Diablo.

Floors: The floors are square and rectangular terra-cotta tile of varied red finishes and sizes, laid at 45 degrees to the main axis with 1/2-inch mortar joints.

Walls: All walls are common bond basalt block, except for the bay window, which is wood frame, now painted white. The block is painted green. The original wall color was cream (off-white), similar to Munsell Color No. 5Y-9/2.

Ceiling: The ceiling has a plaster finish, now covered with wallpaper. The original color was dark blue and was similar to Munsell Color No. 5PB-4/4.

Trim and Casework: There is wood trim at the bay windows and at the single door to the terrace. That door has unorthodox hardware which is probably not original. It also has a solid panel near the floor, and the remainder is glazed. The bay has three windows; there are two double-hung wood sashes, 1 over 1 and a four-lite fixed sash in the center between the other two. There are built-in, roll-up metal screens at each of the double-hung windows. There is a shallow built in bookcase or niche on one wall.

Changes: The original bay window had a window seat which has been removed. There is an elaborate crystal-like ceiling light fixture in the center of this room. The original metal fixture which is on-site should be reconditioned, rewired and reinstalled here. The bookcase has been modified and now has glass shelves and a lower section is built out at a slope for magazines. The bookcase should be restored to match the bookcases in other rooms of the house. The room most probably had wood venetian blinds at the windows, which now have roll-up blinds and a cloth valance. The latter is not original.

THE GUEST ROOM

This bedroom is 14 feet wide by 19 feet long and has an 8 foot high ceiling.

Situation: This room occupies the end of the ground floor on the southeast and is accessible inside only through the living room. There is a short passageway past two closets and a bookcase leading into the room.

Floors: The floors are of random width wood boards set with wood pegs over a wood subfloor. They are stained and waxed and in good condition. A later owner of the house has said these floors were stained or painted black. There is no specific evidence to support that statement now; however, it is not intended to dispute it.

Walls: The three exterior walls are common bond basaltite block; interior walls are wood frame with plaster finish. All walls are presently painted a light green. Wall conditions are generally good; however, there is some minor cracking on the courtyard side.

Ceiling: The ceiling has a plaster finish, now painted white. The original color was a very dark blue, similar to Munsell Color No. 10B-2/4, which is not the same blue used on the living room ceiling.

Doors and Windows: There are windows on three walls; each is double-hung wood sash, two over two. In addition, there is a pair of glazed doors to the courtyard (southwest).

The two closet doors at the entry passage were painted an off-white shade and the bathroom door is mirrored.

Other: There is a bathroom with tub, lavatory and WC. The tub is new; the other items appear to be originals. There is a half-glazed door to a terrace.

Walls here were painted a rich dusty pink shade similar to Munsell Color No. 7.5R-7/6; the present color is recent and an intense blue.

Casework: There are two recesses in the end wall and they now house matching paintings, both rural scenes, which are said to have been installed in the days of the O'Neill residency. The recesses are shown on the original drawings as bookcases.

THE UPPER HALLWAY

The original "L" shape is 4 feet wide and 16 feet long.

Floors: The floors are hardwood over a wood subfloor. They are now mainly covered with carpet which is not original.

Walls: The walls are partially of basalite block common bond and partially of wood frame and plaster. There is one built-in niche at the top of the stair which was formerly a window opening. There is a book-case in another part of the hall in the basalite wall. The addition put on this part of the house has all wood-frame walls and they are painted pale green.

Ceiling: The ceiling has a plaster finish. It is in good condition and is painted pale green. There is an attic access panel in the ceiling of the original built-in linen cupboard.

Trim and Casework: There is wood trim around all doors in the hall. In addition, there is an extensive wood built-in linen storage unit with drawers and shelves. They are all original and in good condition. The addition which joins the upper floor at this space has extensive clothing storage space. There is also a clothes closet located at the mid-level of the stairs on a landing which is original. There is a pair of glazed doors to an upper balcony from this hallway; they provide the only present natural light in the hall. Doors give access to a canvas-covered balcony on the courtyard side.

Changes: At the top of the stairs, there was a recessed book-case and a window. When the new owners extended the hall on the courtyard side, they eliminated the window at the top of the stairs and converted it to a niche, and the original bookcase was opened to become a door into the new room.

CARLOTTA'S BEDROOM - BR NO. 1

This room has an irregular shape; the major portion is 13 by 20 feet, with a generous bay 7 feet deep over Rosie's room. The ceiling height is 8 feet 6 inches.

Situation: This room occupies the northwest end of the second floor block in conjunction with a dressing room and bath.

Floors: Now covered with wall-to wall carpeting, flooring is hardwood over a wood subfloor. There is a possibility that the finish under the present carpet may be that applied when the house was occupied by the O'Neills.

Walls: Part of the exterior wall and part of the bay are common bond basalite block. The remainder of the walls are wood frame with plaster finish. The bay window is wood frame as in Rosie's room below. Most of the walls are finished with wallpaper which is not original. There is a recessed bookcase in the basalite wall. Woodwork and block are now painted white. All walls, both frame and block, were painted an off-white cream, which is similar to Munsell Color No. 4Y-9/2.

Ceiling: The ceiling is a plaster finish on a wood frame, with a nonoriginal light fixture. Now painted white, the ceiling is in good condition. The original color was a dark blue--darker than the ground floor of the living room and the entry area. This shade is similar to Munsell Color No. 5PB-3/4.

Trim and Casework: There is wood trim at the doors and the windows.

Doors and Windows: In the bay, there is a pair of double-hung one over one wood sashes on either side of a 4-lite fixed window. Doors are all single-panel flush except for one glazed door leading to a balcony on the north-east side from the projecting bay. Wardrobe doors now covered with wall-paper were at one time painted a blue color, similar to Munsell No. 2.5PB-5/4, which is not the same as the ceiling color. The bedroom side of the door leading to the dressing room was painted blue, similar to Munsell Color No. 2.5PB-4/6. The two Munsell colors mentioned are very close in hue, tone, and character; and it is most probable that both were painted the same. Neither is a match, however, for the darker blue used on the ceiling of this room.

Changes: The original construction supplied another part to this room that was converted to a walk-in shower in the bathroom. When that occurred, builders eliminated a window on the courtyard side of the house from this room. Adding a shower in the bathroom converted this bedroom into a simple rectangle with a bay. Previously it had been a very irregular shape. There was a communicating door between this bedroom and bedroom No. 2 (Eugene O'Neill's bedroom). Later owners closed this off and converted it into a closet space for bedroom No. 2.

CARLOTTA'S DRESSING ROOM AND BATH

The dressing room is 8 by 10 feet with wardrobes. The bath is 8 1/2 by 9 feet. The ceiling height is 8 feet 6 inches.

Floors: The hardwood over a wood subfloor is now covered with wall-to-wall carpeting in the dressing room. Bath floor tile is a pale ochre with a narrow white border. There is no tile base and the wainscot begins at the floor line. This is possibly not the original ceramic tile and base installed for the O'Neills.

Both second floor bathroom floors, bases, and wainscots, as well as the guest bath on the ground floor were said to have been finished with magnesite, a troweled-on finish material now rarely used. According to Mr. Hans Christiansen, a carpenter employed by the new owners of Tao House immediately following the O'Neills, the magnesite finish was removed and the new tile we now see was installed. Original drawings for the house do not show magnesite as the finish for bathroom floors etc., however it could have been an unrecorded change made during construction.

Walls: All exterior walls are common bond basalt block; all other walls in both spaces are wood frame with a plaster finish. Walls in the dressing room are painted bright blue; and in the bathroom above the tile wainscot, they are purple. The original paint color in both bath and dressing room was a cream (off-white) similar to Munsell Color No. 5Y-9/2.

Ceilings: In both spaces, they are plastered. The original color was the same as the walls and was similar to Munsell Color No. 5Y-9/2.

Trim and Casework: The wood trim and the wood casework in both spaces are painted to match the walls now. There is a built-in fold-up ironing board in the dressing room.

Doors and Windows: Each space has a wood double-hung sash two over two. All doors are single flush panel, wood. All are painted to match the walls of their respective adjacent spaces. All dressing room closet doors are mirrored and original drawings do not show mirrors on these doors.

Changes: In the bathroom, one of the lavatories now in position occupies a space originally occupied by a bidet. Also in the bathroom, there is a ceramic tile wainscot which is not original. The walls were plastered and the base was ceramic tile. In the dressing room, mirrors were added by new owners to the wardrobe doors. They also added two wall lights on either side of a mirror over what is a dressing table location. In the bathroom, there is an added walk-in shower which is not original.

EUGENE O'NEILL'S BEDROOM - BR NO. 2

The original size was 15 1/2 feet by 17 feet long with an 8 1/2 foot ceiling.

Situation: This room occupies the center of the upper block of the building. It is the first room of a three-room suite with a bathroom. By shutting the doors and, thus, closing off the hallway connecting the rooms, Eugene O'Neill was able to form a barrier against any interruption in the days when he was writing his plays here. This generous bedroom was reduced in size by adding a full-height wood frame partition and creating a 3 1/2-foot-wide hallway along one side. This then destroyed the "en-suite" sequence of Eugene O'Neill's special quarters.

Floors: In the present space devoted to bedroom, the hardwood floors are in good condition. It is unknown if they match the color and finish of what was there originally. When the partition is removed, it is most likely that the floor will have to be refinished. A carpet now serves the nonoriginal hallway and the remainder of the room has a refinished floor. The bath has a ceramic tile floor which is white with a solid blue border and a matching blue base plus a white tile wainscot. None of this tile is original; it replaced another tile floor and base and there was originally no tile wainscot here. That work was added by a later owner.

Walls: The two side walls, parallel to the main axis of the house, are of basaltite block in common bond. The remaining two walls are wood frame with plaster finish. There are built-in recessed bookcases in each of the basaltite block walls. The new corridor partition is wood frame with plaster finish. The bathroom has a ceramic tile wainscot which is not original. The original wall color in the bedroom was a cream/off-white, similar to Munsell Color No. 5Y-9/2. Bathroom walls were a gray/tan and were similar to Munsell Color No. 10YR-8/2.

Ceiling: There is plaster finish in both the bedroom and the bathroom. The plaster is now painted white. The bathroom ceiling matched the bath walls, but the bedroom ceiling was painted a yellow/grey similar to Munsell Color No. 2.5Y-7/6.

Trim and Casework: In the bedroom, there is simple wood trim at the doors and the windows. In the bath, there is a walk-in shower which was originally a storage cupboard with five shelves.

Doors and Windows: There are two double-hung wood sashes, two over two with built-in screens in the bedroom and a similar window in the bath. There is also a pair of glazed doors from the bedroom to a balcony on the northeast side of the house. Interior doors are single-panel flush wood doors, painted. The bedroom side of doors to the hall, the

dressng room, the closet and the bath were all a light grey similar to Munsell Color No. 10B-7/1.

Changes: An important change in the house is the addition of the partition for the length of this bedroom. Another was the closing off of the door between O'Neill's bedroom and Carlotta's bedroom. Another was the conversion of the cupboard in the bathroom to a walk-in shower. A door from the upper hallway into the room has been removed or moved and has become the door into the small bedroom which was created out of O'Neill's original bedroom.

EUGENE O'NEILL'S DRESSING ROOM

The present and original size is 8 1/2 by 9 1/2 feet, with an 8 1/2 foot ceiling.

Situation: This space is the second in the series of rooms which, with closed doors, afforded privacy for O'Neill when he was occupied with writing.

Walls: The end wall and one side wall are basalite block; the other walls are wood frame with plaster finish. There is one built-in bookcase and the walls are painted white.

Floors: The floors are hardwood over a wood subfloor on wood frame. There is a strip of carpet which is not original.

Ceiling: A plaster finish and white painted ceiling, and the original color matched the walls.

Casework: There are three built-in wardrobes which extend up to the ceiling, two with hinged doors and the other with sliding doors, all painted with a Chinese red lacquer finish which is original. The red color is similar to Munsell Color No. 10R-3/10. The sliding doors here are partially glazed with frosted glass and were used for display of programs of some of the earlier O'Neill plays. That information was supplied by Mr. Simpson, the builder of the house, who said the programs from "operas" were mounted on canvas on frames and were removable.

There is a single double-hung wood sash, two over two, with built-in roll-up screens. The French doors are fitted with a wood venetian blind.

EUGENE O'NEILL'S STUDY

The study is 14 feet by 17 feet with an enclosed porch beyond. The ceiling is 8 feet 6 inches high.

Situation: This is the last room in O'Neill's private suite, and it is the most remote part of the main block of the house.

Floor: The floor is of random-width hardwood with wood pegs. It has been stained and waxed, is a yellow/brown combination, and is in good condition.

Walls: The three exterior walls of this room are of basaltic block in common bond with six built-in recessed bookcases. The remaining wall with a fireplace is part basaltic block and part wood frame, faced with wood paneling. The opposite block wall is also faced with wood paneling. Painted surfaces were probably white/cream, similar to Munsell Color No. 5Y-9/2.

Ceiling: Wood boards are 1 by 12. There are also 4 inch by 6 inch wood beams at 3 feet 8 inches on center. The ceiling surface has been finished with a Chinese red lacquer that matched the red in the dressing room. This has, however, been toned down by a later owner, who applied grey wash. The red color was originally similar to Munsell Color No. 10R-3/10.

Trim and Casework: There is wood paneling on two of the walls in this room—at the fireplace and on the opposite wall. The end wall has two original built-in bookcases with added glass doors installed by a later owner. Door and window trim is wood, and on the fireplace wall there is a closet on either side of the fireplace built into the paneling, both partially concealed in the joinery of the paneling.

Windows and Doors: There is one wood double-hung sash, two over two, on each of two long walls of this room and there is a pair of glazed wood doors at the end opposite the fireplace; those doors have a finish similar to the paneling in the room. The door from the dressing closet is a single-panel flush wood door. Windows were equipped with wood venetian blinds, and they are still in place.

THE STUDY PORCH

The study porch is 8 feet by 15 feet, with a ceiling which reflects the hipped roof above it.

Situation: This is the final space on the upper floor of the main block of the house. It was formerly an open porch but was enclosed when the O'Neills lived in the house.

Floor: The floor is wood frame with a waterproof canvas finish painted a blue or turquoise color.

Walls: The lower porch walls are basaltic block as is the house wall which is common to the study. Low exterior walls on three sides were a parapet for the open porch and now have been converted to support the roof above and a series of casement sashes. All basaltic block was painted cream/white and was similar to Munsell Color No. 5Y-9/2.

Ceiling: The ceiling is open structural wood which has been enclosed by a tenant using a poor grade of wood veneer paneling, part of which is coming off. This shows that the wood shingles on the roof above were applied with nails which were too long and penetrated the wood sheathing of the roof. This is probably the reason for their application of the wood veneer finish on the ceiling. The structural wood ceiling is painted green, similar to Munsell Color No. 10GY-5/6.

Doors and Windows: A pair of glazed wood doors centered on the end basaltic block wall lead into the study up a low step from the porch floor. There are three pairs of casement sashes across the long wall of the porch on the end and two pairs on each of the side walls. There is a single small wood panel filler on both outside corners. All sashes and frames are painted green, similar to Munsell Color No. 10GY-5/6.

THE PANTRY

The pantry is 11 feet by 17 feet with an 8 foot 6 inch high ceiling (same size as kitchen).

Situation: This room is located between the dining room and the kitchen.

Floor: The floor has dark green linoleum over a wood floor. The linoleum is in good condition. The original kitchen/pantry floor finish was linoleum, but this was put down by a recent owner.

Walls: The common wall with the dining room is basalite block. All other walls in the pantry are wood frame with plaster finish. They are now partly painted and partly finished with wallpaper which is not original. The wall surfaces are in good condition.

Ceiling: The ceiling is plaster on wood frame and is now painted an orange color. The plaster is in good condition.

Trim and Casework: There is wood trim at the door and window openings. The casework in this room is particularly nice. There are two long base cabinets on two long walls and hanging cupboards with glazed doors above. The counter tops of these are wood. The lower units are fitted with shelves and various sizes of drawers. An owner after the O'Neills said they were untouched and therefore are believed to be original. One that is not original is the counter on the short wall under the pantry window. It is a newer metal cupboard unit with a built-in dishwasher and a formica top.

Windows and Doors: The window over the dishwasher is wood double-hung, two over two sash. At the opposite end of the room is a pair of glazed doors leading out to the loggia. These doors are not original; original drawings show a double-hung window. The dining room also has doors to the loggia; and Mr. Simpson, the builder, has said that these doors are original. However, photographs show that there were windows in this location during O'Neill's residence. If that was the case, perhaps the pantry doors and the dining room doors were installed at the same time. Mr. Simpson's statement that the dining room doors were original is, as yet, unexplained. Each of these french doors has two lites. One leaf has a dog (or cat) cut-out plugged with plywood. There is also a double-acting door between the pantry and the dining room. It is assumed to be the original single-panel door. Another similar door on the opposite side of the room leads into the kitchen. This also is assumed to be original.

CHAUFFEUR'S BEDROOM

The chauffeur's bedroom is 10 by 12 feet and the ceiling is 8 feet 6 inches high.

Situation: The bedroom and the bathroom occupy the north corner of the main floor in the service wing.

Floor: (Carpet has been removed.) The hardwood floor is somewhat damaged near the door from a leaking radiator. Brown wall-to-wall carpeting has recently been installed.

Walls: The walls have a plaster finish on wood frame and they are painted a cream color. The finish is in good condition as the room has been repainted recently.

Ceilings: The ceilings have a plaster finish on wood frame and are also painted a cream color, which matches the walls. The finish needs repainting, but the condition of the plaster is good.

Trim, Casework, Windows and Doors: The trim is wood and there is no casework in this space. The windows are wood double-hung, two over two, sashes. The doors into the hall, closet and bath are all wood flush panel and painted. The bathroom has a similar wood window.

THE KITCHEN

The kitchen is 11 feet by 17 feet and has an 8 foot 6 inch high ceiling.

Situation: This space is next in line after the pantry in the service wing of the building.

Floors: The floors are a dark green linoleum over a wood floor on a wood frame. This matches the linoleum in the pantry space and was installed at the same time.

Walls: These are plaster on wood frame and in good condition. Most of the wall surfaces in the kitchen are painted cream.

Ceilings: This is plaster on wood frame and it is in good condition. It is painted orange.

Trim and Casework: The trim at the door and two windows is wood. The double-acting door between the kitchen and pantry is believed to be original. The other opening in this room is a cased opening leading to the back entry hall. A small double-hung, two over two, wood sash is located over the kitchen sink on the short cross wall of the room. There is a large wood double-hung, two over two, window facing the loggia. (Note that if the windows shown on the plan for the dining room and the pantry were once double-hung sashes, they would probably have been the same as this large window.) The major cabinetry here is original with base unit and hanging cupboard similar to the pantry except counter tops are formica. The opposite wall is occupied by the kitchen stove. The cross wall, with small double-hung sash, has a metal base unit, including a double kitchen sink. That and the two hanging cupboards on either side of the window are not original.

Other: When the O'Neills lived here, they started a tradition to keep a kerosene lamp on a hook over the kitchen stove as an emergency light. There were numerous times when the power failed.

Changes: Changes include conversion of the original base unit with a kitchen sink and hanging cupboards on the outside wall to the metal base unit. There is also a large hole (5-inch diameter) cut through the frame and plaster wall on the southwest side low in the corner. Its purpose is unknown; in appearance, it is an exhaust for a dryer.

THE REAR ENTRY

The original size was 7 feet wide by 8 feet long with an 8 foot 6 inch high ceiling.

Situation: The rear entry is a circulation space of the service wing which serves also as an adjunct to the kitchen. The refrigerator is located here in a special niche near the kitchen end. The service entrance gives access to the kitchen, the chauffeur's quarters and the maids' quarters.

Floor: Dark green linoleum covers the wood floor and subfloor on wood frame. It matches the finish in the kitchen and the pantry and was installed at the same time. It is in good condition.

Walls: The walls are plaster on wood frame and are in good condition. They are now a cream color and need painting.

Ceiling: The ceiling is plaster on wood frame and is in good condition. It is now a cream color and in need of painting.

Trim, Casework, Window and Doors: The trim and the casework are wood. The casework consists of a built-in cooler which has probably not recently been used as such. There is a new broom closet, which is not original. A window in the end wall is wood, double-hung sash, two over two. The exterior door is half glazed; other doors are solid, single-flush panel. There is a cased opening to the kitchen with no door.

Changes: The original drawings show that this space was intended as a laundry area with stationary washtubs. A later owner removed those and in their place, installed a stairway to the basement area under this wing. At the same time, the small broom closet was added. The addition of the stairway has reduced the size of the space by about one-half. To have adequate stairs, it was necessary to modify the hall leading to the maids' bedrooms. Here a floor panel lifts up to make the basement stairs accessible. It is somewhat inconvenient, but it does work.

THE MAIDS' BEDROOMS AND BATH

Room No. 1 is 10 by 14 feet and room no. 2 is 9 by 10 feet. The bath is 5 1/2 by 6 1/2 feet. All rooms have an 8 foot 6 inch ceiling.

Floors: The floors are covered with brown wall-to-wall carpeting. The original floor under the carpet is hardwood, condition unknown. The floor of the bathroom is vinyl tile and the base is wood.

Walls: The finish is plaster on wood frame. They are painted a white or cream color. The finish is good and the condition of the plaster is good. Walls in bath are similar to bedrooms.

Ceiling: The finish is plaster on wood frame. It is painted and the condition of both finish and plaster is good. The ceiling in the bathroom is similar and the color matches the walls.

Trim, Windows and Doors: There is no casework in these rooms. The trim is wood at the doors and the windows. Windows, as in other rooms in the house, are wood double-hung, two over two, sashes. Doors are single-panel wood and painted. In bedroom no. 1 (the larger bedroom and next to last room in the service passageway), there is a large fixed window which was added in the frame wall on the northwest side of the courtyard. There is a framed opening in this room which leads into the last room in line. There is no door at this opening.

Other: There is a passageway which connects these two rooms and the party room to the remainder of the residence. This hallway is 3 feet 6 inches wide and 15 feet long. This space has floor, walls and ceiling similar to the bedrooms; and in addition, there is a pair of french doors leading onto the loggia of the courtyard. The bath contains a tub, a WC and a lavatory and connects to each of the bedrooms. Each bedroom has a small closet.

Changes: Changes are the addition of the window in the courtyard wall of bedroom no. 1 and the cased opening into the party room. Each of the bedrooms originally had a lavatory basin with a built-in medicine cabinet. These have been removed.

THE PARTY ROOM (FORMER SERVICE YARD)

This room is 21 feet long by 14 feet wide.

Situation: This is the final room of the house (except for spaces in the basement). This space was, in the original plan, a service or drying yard and was enclosed by owners who followed the O'Neills.

Floor: This surface is covered with brown wall-to-wall carpeting installed in mid-1977. It is in good condition. It is unknown what the underfloor construction is.

Walls: Three of the walls are wood frame and the remaining wall is common bond basalt block. The basalt block is common to the garage, which is adjacent to this room. Two of the walls in this room have knotty pine wood paneling with a waxed finish. Other walls are painted white.

Ceiling: This is plaster on wood frame and it is in good condition. The ceiling is painted white.

Trim and Casework: Trim is wood at the one cased opening and the single double-hung wood, two over two, sash. On the northwest side of this room, there are three fully glazed five-lite doors which lead out to a new terrace. Casework in this space is somewhat more elaborate. It is, in fact, a small kitchen, and all woodwork is finished knotty pine which matches the paneling on the walls.

Changes: In addition to the enclosure of this room, the door between the maid's bedroom no. 1 and the party room replaces a double-hung window which was centered on the maid's room wall facing southwest and shown on the original drawings. This was blocked off when the party room was constructed.

Safety Inspection: An electrical convenience outlet in the wall near the sink is burned. A licensed electrician should check for a short circuit here. There is also a missing electrical cover plate on an electric outlet near the floor. This should be added.

THE BASEMENT

The original basement was 11 feet 6 inches by 28 feet, not including the bay. The new basement is 17 feet by 40 feet (remainder is crawl space).

Situation: There are two usable basement areas, the original located under the front entry hall and Rosie's room and the new part located under the pantry, kitchen and chauffeur's suite. The two are separated by a crawl space under the dining room. That crawl space has been cut through so that one may pass from original to new without going up to the main floor. The passageway is rough but convenient.

Floor: Both parts of the basement have a concrete slab floor. The new section has a short ramp of 6 inches toward one end of the space. There is ratproofing on the floors in the remainder of the understructure.

Walls: The walls are concrete and are also a part of the foundation system. A portion of the new basement is above grade and those walls are wood frame.

Ceiling: The ceiling is wood frame with the exposed underside of the main floor construction overhead.

Trim and Casework: There is very little trim, but there is some casework which has been installed along two long walls in the new part of the basement. There are generous storage cupboards of wood with doors. These were added by later owners, it is believed.

Windows and Doors: There are two wood double-hung sashes, two over two, that match the windows on the main floor above. The exterior door here is half-glazed and is in the northwest corner. All of these openings are in the new basement.

Stairs: There are two sets. The original stairs have 14 risers and descend from the main floor entry hall under the main stairs. They are wood framed, as are the new stairs which descend from the rear entry hall. The new stairs were added by later owners, and are also wood.

Other: There are crawl spaces which are accessible under other parts of the house and were not excavated. The floors of these are ratproofed; the walls are the building foundations. The space under the maids' rooms of the service wing has been converted to a storage area. It has somewhat more headroom than the others and there are some added storage shelves in this section.

THE GARAGE--INTERIOR

The garage is 20 feet wide by 21 feet deep.

Situation: This space is the final enclosed portion of the original structure, excluding the basement.

Floor: The floor is a concrete slab sloped toward the front to drain.

Walls: The walls are basalite block, common bond, unpainted.

Ceiling: There is no ceiling--only the exposed structure of the tile roof.

Windows: There is a single double-hung sash, wood, two over two, on the courtyard side. The original drawings showed that this window was not to have glass.

Doors: The main garage door is an overhead type, now electrically operated. The original was hand-operated and had vertical markings as seen on a photograph of Eugene O'Neill standing in the car court.

TERRACES AND BALCONIES AND LOGGIA

These are of various sizes and on two levels. All of them are exterior spaces.

Floors: The floors are of brick pavement, for the most part in good condition. Balconies have waterproof canvas over T & G decking.

Walls: Depending on their location, the walls are of basalite block or horizontal transite siding and in some cases, a combination of both.

Ceilings: Over the covered portions, the original ceiling was the exposed framing which supports the Spanish tile. In one case, the loggia at the dining room/kitchen area, a wood finish ceiling has been applied to the underside of the roof framing members.

Changes: One of the changes is that mentioned above at the loggia ceiling. Another is the removal of two posts and post caps at the terrace adjacent to the living room and Rosie's room on the northeast side of the house adjacent to the party room. All metalwork on the balcony on the courtyard side is an addition.

THE GUEST COTTAGE (TRUNK ROOM)

This small building located in the courtyard is 10 feet wide and 25 feet long. It is built in the style of the main house and uses similar materials and colors.

Situation: This building is located with its main axis in a northeast, southwest line. It occupies the southern corner of the courtyard and, indeed, tends to anchor that corner of the courtyard. It now has two rooms which are a bedroom and a bath. There is also a small closet.

Floor: The floor is a concrete slab on grade with an asbestos tile finish. The condition of the tile is poor.

Walls: The walls are of reinforced basalt block, common bond. The interior surfaces are painted white as are the exterior. The outside is now covered on several sides with a dense growth of vines. This was more severe but was removed where it had begun to penetrate the roof structure at the eaves. The bedroom wall has a built-in electric heater.

Roof: The cottage has a hipped roof finished with black mission-type terra-cotta tile with white concrete infill at ridges.

Ceiling: The ceiling is plaster on lath and painted white. There is evidence that a roof leak has occurred and the ceiling will need to be repaired after the roof surface has been treated for leaks.

Doors, Windows and Shutters: There is a single exterior door on the northeast end of the building. This is made up of vertical planks and is painted. Three double-hung wood sashes, all two over two, are located on the long sides of the building, one on the northwest and two on the southeast. Each window is equipped with operable wood shutters painted brown, similar to those on the main house.

Changes: This building was called the trunk room by the O'Neills. The Miller/Gerdes converted it to a guest cottage with its own bathroom and closet.

ENTRANCE TO THE PROPERTY

Situation: A pair of round stone gate pillars are located plus or minus 500 feet from the present property line on Kuss Road. These originally marked the gateway to TAO House and were constructed during the days of O'Neill's residence here.

They are about three feet in diameter and seven feet high. Cylindrical in shape, they have a projecting stone cap ring near the top with a slightly rounded depressed conical top, all of stone, and an oriental appearance. Sides are finished with random coursed stone set in concrete. There is probably a concrete base under each. Both pillars have an inset two by six wood vertical nailer which face one another across the roadway. These were used to attach a gate or closure across the road.

THE WATER SYSTEM--IRRIGATION

Description: The core of this system is a large storage pond which is near the property boundary and located on land owned by the East Bay Regional Parks District. This is man-made and was probably put in during the Miller/Gerdes family ownership. Its capacity is estimated at about 12 1/2 acre-feet and it is fed primarily by runoff with some addition from a spring located 3/4 mile up the canyon above it. Capacity of the spring is estimated at 300 to 400 gallons per day. Water rights to that spring are owned by the O'Neill Foundation. (The Foundation has title water rights to a total of five different springs west of the property.)

At the pond, there is a five-stage high-pressure pump. It is a single-phase, 3-horsepower pump that runs on 220 volts and is now out of order. All electrical service to the pump is new including circuit breakers and conduits. The pond and the pump are not on property owned by the O'Neill Foundation. The water line from the pond feeds a 3 1/2 inch main, which supplies irrigation to the main grounds of the property, the barn, and the caretaker's house (that one near the front gate) called the Crandall's house. It also supplies irrigation for livestock. This irrigation system covers all of the ranch property and supplies water to the swimming pool. There are four 1 1/2-inch standpipes for fire fighting purposes located at various spots on the property.

Other: Directly south of the old barn and east of the new barn is a 45-foot-deep well with a 6-inch casing and a jet pump, all dry. This has not produced in the last ten years. It was put in under the ownership of the Miller/Gerdes and is post-O'Neill.

THE FRESHWATER SYSTEM--POTABLE

Description: This system, which is entirely separate from the pond water irrigation system, begins up the hillside. About 150 feet above Tao House and to the west, there are located a series of three large redwood storage tanks. Two of these fill and drain simultaneously, and each holds 10,000 gallons. The third tank acts as an overflow and holds about 10,000 gallons.

Further up the hill, is the main fresh water source, a spring which is partly artesian. The Eugene O'Neill Foundation owns rights to that spring which is on land owned by the East Bay Regional Parks District. The water storage tanks are painted green and are generally in good condition. The water tanks have been given new covers and new inspection hatches recently. Water from here travels downhill by main to a distribution box located near the guest cottage outside the courtyard and beside a brick walkway. The water is distributed to the pool area and to all buildings on the property (except the old barn, which does not have fresh water)—the new barn, the Crandalls' house and, of course, the main house and the guest cottage.

There are two HABS photographs of these storage tanks, under a separate file: Eugene O'Neill House, Freshwater Tanks, HABS No. CA-2078 H.

THE SEWAGE SYSTEM

Description: There are four separate septic tank/percolation field systems which serve the present complex: (1) Waste from the main house travels downhill toward the pool area where it is joined by a branch from the pool and pool house and continues downhill to an underground septic tank. From there water goes to a percolation field which is again downhill. This system has never given any problems. (2) The new barn has a separate system which, up to now, has not given any problems either. (3) The small guest cottage (trunk room) has a septic tank and a drainage field in the vicinity of the orange trees nearby. The system works well and has not been a troublesome one. (4) The final system serves the caretaker house (Crandall). The system was put in by the Miller/Gerdes family and is not a part of the original O'Neill complex.



NAPA

SONOMA

FAIRFIELD

PETALUMA

VALLEJO

NOVATO

SAN ANSELMO

SAN RAFAEL

RICHMOND

MARTINEZ

PITTSBURG

MILL VALLEY

BOLINAS

BERKELEY

ORINDA

CONCORD

WALNUT CREEK

OAKVILLE

EUGENE O'NEILL NH

SAN FRANCISCO

SAN LEANDRO

OALY CITY

HAYWARD

SAN BRUNO

FREMONT

SAN MATEO

REDWOOD CITY

PALO ALTO

SUNNYVALE

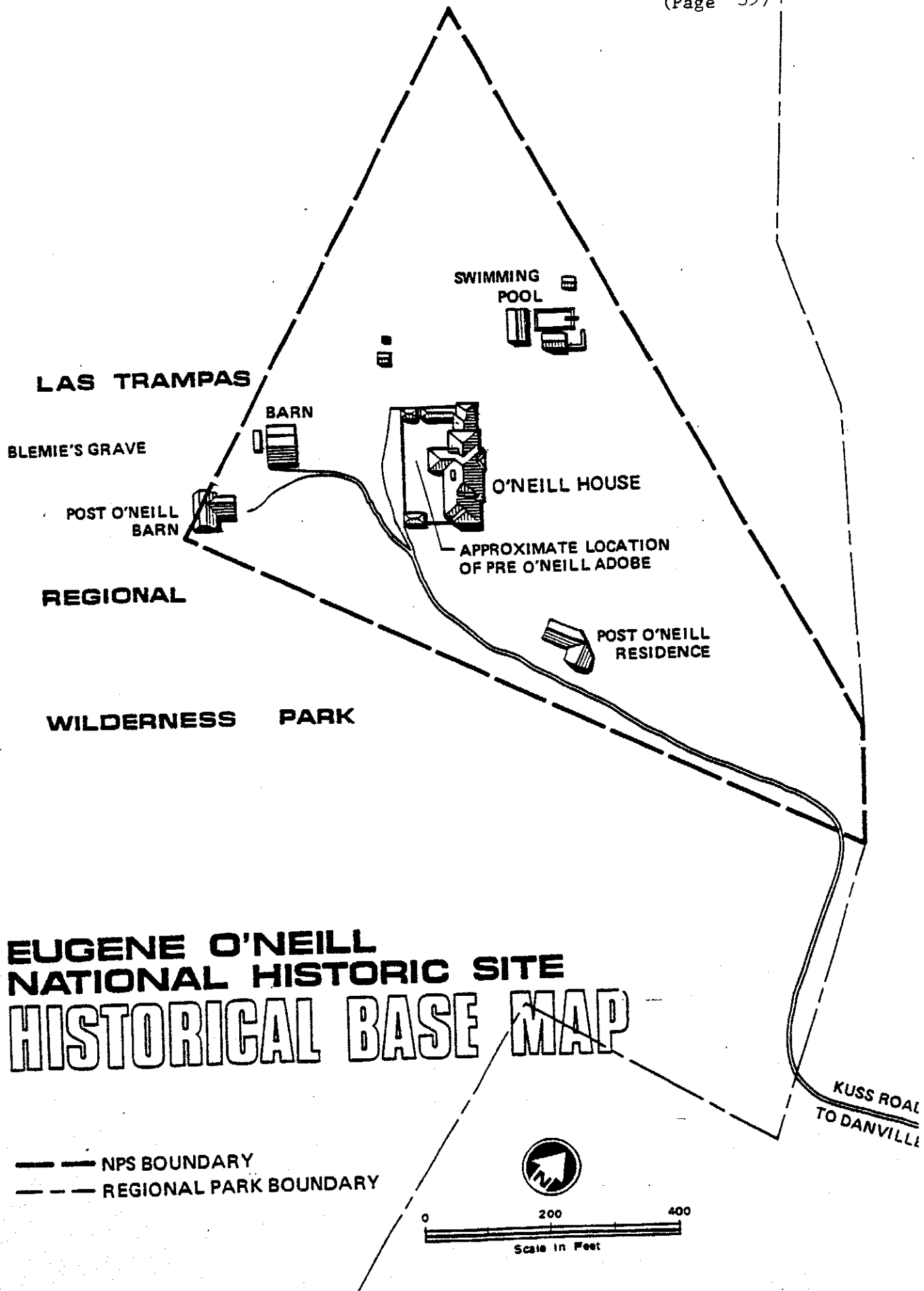
SAN JOSE

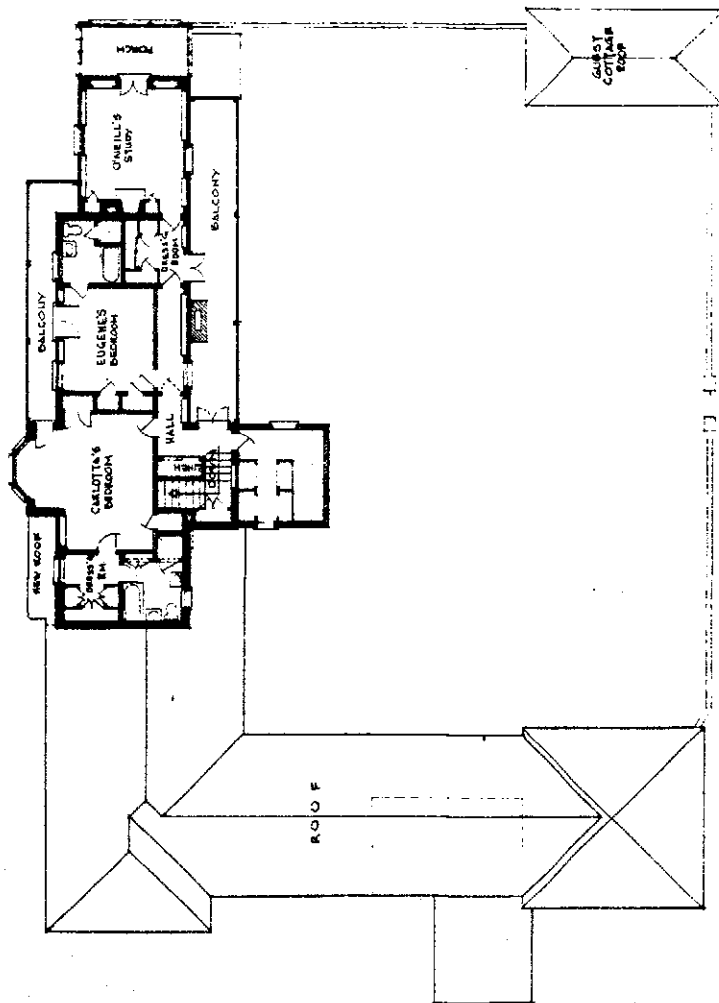


San Francisco Bay region

EUGENE O'NEILL
NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE







Second Floor Plan

TAO HOUSE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE JEFFREY M. HALL SAN FRANCISCO CALIFORNIA	PREPARED BY J. L. COOK DATE 1967	TITLE OF DRAWING SECOND FLOOR PLAN NAME OF PARK EUGENE O'NEILL HISTORIC SITE COUNTY CALIF.	DRAWING NO. 1000 SHEET 2 OF 4
	PROJECTED DATE 1967	NAME OF ARCHITECT J. L. COOK DATE 1967	COUNTY CALIF.

HABS No. (A-2078)

Eugene O'Neill House
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TAO HOUSE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA	PREPARED BY A. COMPTON District Engineer "C"	TITLE OF DRAWING BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN NAME OF PARK EUGENE O'NEILL NATL HISTORIC SITE ADDRESS 1000 WASH. ST. S.F. CALIF.	DRAWING NO. EUGO 500000
	SHEET 3 OF 4	DATE J. 7 '34 PROJECT OCT 1930	SCALE 1" = 4'-0"

DATE	NUMBER	FILE
		HABS No. CA-2078

Eugene O'Neill House

HABS No. CA-2078

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Knollenberg, Bernard
Macgowan, Kenneth
Nichols, Dudley
Sisk, Robert

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Sheet 1. Exterior Elevation, Foundation & Floor Plans
Sheet 2. Fixed Glass Window Details, Sections
Not in numbered series: Uncaptioned and undated - new fireplace

Residence for Mr. and Mrs. Eugene O'Neill, Walnut Creek (sic), California.
[Tao House] Plans by Frederick L. Confer, Berkeley, California:

Sheet 1.	(Missing - possibly a cover sheet)	
Sheet 2.	Foundation & Basement Plan - Footings	July 1, 1937
Sheet 3.	First Floor Plan, with Cornice Detail	July 1, 1937
Sheet 4.	Second Floor Plan, with Deck Rail Detail	July 23, 1937
Sheet 5.	East and West Elevations	July 1937
Sheet 6.	North and South Elevations, Kitchen and Pantry Details	July 1937
Sheet 7.	Interior Details, Bookcases	July 1937
Sheet 8.	Interior Details, Bookcases	July 1937
Sheet 9.	Second Floor Room Details	July 1937
Sheet 10.	Typical Construction Details	July 23, 1937
Not in numbered series: Study Interior		Oct. 4, 1937

Sketch of proposed house for Mr. and Mrs. Eugene O'Neill, by Frederick L. Confer, Architect. February 1937.

Survey No. 2624, June 1937, For: Mr. Ralph Coffey. Location: In S. E. 1/4 Sec. 24, T. 1 S, R. 2 W. Mt Diablo Base and Meridian. J. W. Wilson & Co., Inc., Engrs. (Survey of land prior to construction of Tao House, showing two adobe buildings.)

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Albertoni, Albert (husband of Eugene O'Neill's nurse); interview by Gordon Chappell, Travis Bogard.

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Andrews, Florence (color specialist with Gump's, now retired, who worked with Carlotta O'Neill on Tao House interior decoration); interview by Gordon Chappell.

Christiansen, Hans (contractor for some remodeling of Tao House by new owners, and briefly an occupant of the house); interview by Lois Sizoo and Diane Blair.

Coffey, Roy (the O'Neills' Oakland attorney - declined formal interview but did answer a few questions by telephone); queried by Gordon Chappell.

Gerdis, Mrs. Stanley (owner of Tao House after the O'Neills, first as Mrs. Arthur Carlson, then as Mrs. Hugh Miller, finally as Mrs. Gerdis); interview by Travis Bogard.

Gilberd, Miriam (widow of the O'Neills interior decorator, Walton Gilberd); interview by Dr. Travis Bogard, Gordon Chappell, Robert Cox, and others.

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Soule, Everett Pomeroy (Real Estate Agent who showed the O'Neills the Bryant property and arranged its sale to them); telephone interview by Gordon Chappell.

Graphic Sources

Photographs of Eugene and Carlotta O'Neill at Tao House, including interiors, taken by Time-Life photographer George Gruen, and possibly others; 10 views, prints from Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University Libraries, Yale University.